

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T VATICAN 002531

SIPDIS

BEIJING PASS CHENGDU

DEPARTMENT FOR DRL (FARR); EUR/WE (VAN CLEVE); EAP/CM

SHENYANG FOR PAUL SIMON

FROM EMBASSY VATICAN/MESSAGE NO. 65/01

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/29/11

TAGS: [VT](#) [CH](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [PINR](#)

SUBJECT: VATICAN NON-REACTIONS ON CHINA AND DEMARCHE
ON TAIWAN ARMS TALKS.

REF A: STATE 72589 REF B: VATICAN 00747

REF C: BEIJING 3977

(U) CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. JOSEPH
MERANTE. REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

1. (S) POLOFF DELIVERED REFTEL DEMARCHE POINTS ON
APRIL 27 TO MONSIGNOR ROTA-GRAZIOSI, VATICAN CHINA
DESK OFFICER. ROTA-GRAZIOSI WELCOMED USG APPROACH BUT
RESPONDED THAT THE VATICAN MAINTAINED CAREFUL
NEUTRALITY ON SECURITY QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PRC
AND TAIWAN AND DECLINED TO OFFER COMMENT.

2. (C) POLOFF USED OCCASION TO DISCUSS PRC DETENTION
OF UNDERGROUND CATHOLIC CLERGY, RAISING THE CASE OF
BISHOP SHI ENXIANG. ROTA-GRAZIOSI ADMITTED THE VATICAN
WAS CONVINCED BISHOP SHI HAD BEEN DETAINED BUT HE
DECLINED TO STATE WHETHER THE VATICAN HAD RECEIVED
INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION. HE SHOWED ONLY SUBDUED
CONCERN, NOTING THAT DETENTIONS OF THIS NATURE WERE
ROUTINE FOR THE EASTER AND CHRISTMAS SEASON AND
CONSTITUTED A FORM OF HABITUAL STATE HARASSMENT. ROTA-
GRAZIOSI APPEARED OBLIVIOUS TO USG AND OTHER
DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES ON BEHALF OF BISHOP SHI. WHILE
HE WELCOMED USG INTEREST IN BISHOP SHI AND OTHER
DETAINED CLERGY, ROTA-GRAZIOSI NEITHER REQUESTED NOR
PROVIDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. HE STRESSED THAT THE
VATICAN WAS NOT SEEKING SPECIAL TREATMENT FROM THE USG
ON BEHALF OF THE UNDERGROUND CLERGY IN CHINA, YET HE
SECRET

PAGE 03 VATICA 02531 090723Z
ENJOINED THE USG TO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM FOR ALL RELIGIONS IN THE PRC.

3. (C) ROTA-GRAZIOSI ACKNOWLEDGED VATICAN-PRC
RAPPROCHEMENT WAS AT AN IMPASSE. HE LAMENTED THE
DISASTROUS CHOICE OF DATE -- OCTOBER 1, CHINESE
NATIONAL DAY - FOR THE MASS BEATIFICATION OF CHINESE
MARTYRS IN A VATICAN CEREMONY. HE INSISTED THIS WAS A
BUREAUCRATIC BLUNDER CAUSED BY THE COMPLICATED
CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE JUBILEE YEAR, A REMARK
MISSION HAS HEARD REPEATEDLY WITHIN VATICAN CIRCLES.
HE REGRETTED THAT THE PRC CHOSE TO EXPLOIT THE
VATICAN'S CHOICE OF DATE AS A PRETEXT TO ASSAIL THE
BEATIFICATIONS AND HEIGHTEN TENSIONS. HE MENTIONED
THAT THE PRC HAD NOT MADE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT WHEN
THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH SIMILARLY BEATIFIED
CHRISTIAN MARTYRS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION A MONTH
EARLIER.

4. (C) ROTA-GRAZIOSI BRUSHED ASIDE REPORTS THAT THE
VATICAN AND THE PRC HAD BEEN ON THE VERGE OF A
BREAKTHROUGH IN RELATIONS PRIOR TO THE CONTROVERSIAL
BEATIFICATION CEREMONY ON OCTOBER 1. ROTA-GRAZIOSI
ATTRIBUTED THE RUMORS DIRECTLY TO THE PRC, WHICH HE
SAID HOPED THEREBY TO EMBELLISH ITS CANDIDACY FOR THE
2008 OLYMPIC GAMES.

5. (C) COMMENT: ROTA-GRAZIOSI EXHIBITS A DEGREE OF
CAUTION WITH USG INTERLOCUTORS THAT IS UNUSUAL EVEN BY
THE VATICAN'S USUAL RESERVED STANDARDS. HE AVOIDS
MEETINGS WHEN POSSIBLE. ROTA-GRAZIOSI HAS BEEN
SECRET

PAGE 04 VATICA 02531 090723Z
INVOLVED IN VATICAN PRC POLICY SINCE 1991, FIRST AS AN
ASSISTANT TO ARCHBISHOP CELLI, FORMER VATICAN DFM AND
PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT OF ITS CHINA POLICY, AND SINCE
1995 AS THE VATICAN'S CHINA DESK OFFICER. MERANTE

SECRET

>